

OCTOBER, 1972



DIGEST

THE CO-OPERATIVE FEDERATION
OF AUSTRALIA

THE CO-OPERATIVE FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

- * Is a federation for all types of co-operatives throughout Australia.
- * Is affiliated with the International Co-operative Alliance.
- * Among its objects are:

TO promote the development of co-operative enterprise in all forms in Australia by giving counsel and providing regular opportunities for mutual discussion of co-operative ambitions and problems.

TO advance the claims of co-operative enterprise for adequate, and where necessary protective, legislation and to foster among government and commercial administrative authorities an intelligent understanding of co-operative aims and principles.

TO foster unity within the co-operative movement in Australia.

TO compile reliable statistics of co-operative activity in Australia regarding membership, business turnover, resources, co-operative distribution, and any other details indicating its strength and progress.

TO maintain liaison with international co-operative organisations and to exchange information of mutual advantage in aiding the extension of co-operation.

Members are:

The Co-operative Federation of Queensland; The Co-operative Federation of New South Wales; The Co-operative Federation of Victoria; The Co-operative Federation of Western Australia; The Murray River Wholesale Co-operative Society, South Australia; The Wine and Brandy Co-operative Producers' Association of Australia.

Associate members are:

The Australian Federation of Credit Union Leagues; The Australian Producers' Wholesale Co-operative, Victoria; The Co-operative Insurance Company of Australia; The Eudunda Farmers' Co-operative Society, South Australia; The Newcastle & District Co-operative Society, New South Wales.

CO-OP DIGEST

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Editor
J. Lawrence

CONTENTS

Co-op Digest is published three times a year by the Co-operative Federation of Victoria, 49 a'Beckett Street, Melbourne, for the Co-operative Federation of Australia. \$1 per year.

CO-OP COMMENT

CO-OP DIGEST is published to inform and to stimulate. There should be no need to stimulate because each co-operative has a purpose which should constantly arouse its directors and management to continued energy and new initiatives.

How long is it since your co-operative examined itself against its purpose? Does your co-operative have any regular method of reviewing its progress against its objectives and of assessing whether its progress is good enough?

This means more than reviewing economic results. A co-operative could be successful financially without being a success as a co-operative.

One method of providing for self-examination is for a co-operative to apply the long standing principle of co-operative education.

Does your co-operative have a director who is responsible for co-operative education? Or an officer who is? Or a sub committee that is? Or if your co-operative is a large one does it have a co-operative education section?

Some such application in a co-operative appears necessary or co-operatives will be in danger of losing their reason for existence. It is too easy to become businesses with no appreciable differences from the free enterprise system which is motivated by private profit.

Having somebody in your co-operative who is responsible for co-op education, and a board which recognises the fact, will protect the right pursuit of the co-op's objectives. This will keep the co-op moving to uplift the individual members and to exert a good influence in the industry and community in which the co-op exists.

By making co-op education mean something, a co-operative will give members and intending members an opportunity to appreciate co-operation. The effort should be rewarded by increased patronage and support from an educated membership.

Youth and women must be included in the co-operative movements' education program.

TWO AT SPECIAL SUVA COURSE

CO-OPERATIVE FOR ABORIGINES LTD (NSW)

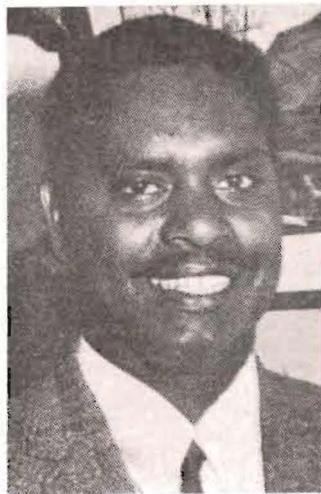
HARRISON George, from Darnley Island, Torres Strait Islands, and Percy Neal, from Yarrabah Aboriginal Settlement, North Queensland, attended a special two-weeks course at the Roy F. Bergengren Credit Union Training Centre, Suva, Fiji, in July this year.

The opportunity was provided with assistance from the Australian Federation of Credit Unions.

During the course, which specialised in credit unions, Messrs. George and Neal visited village communities to observe the functions of credit unions in local communities.

These two men came from Aboriginal communities where the credit movement and co-operative and community action have a real and positive future.

Harrison George, a full-time employee of Co-opera-



Harrison George

tive for Aborigines Limited, trained in accountancy and office management at the Aboriginal Co-operative College, Tranby, Glebe.

He has worked in organising an all-Aboriginal Co-operative Committee in North Queensland, which aims to *continued next page*

from previous page

establish a co-operative venture at Clump Mountain, and at Yarrabah.

Percy Neal, the son of the chairman of the co-operative committee at Yarrabah, is nearing completion of an apprenticeship in baking. He aims to operate a co-operative bakery that the Yarrabah people are working to establish this year.

The course at Suva followed the program of adult education of Aborigines conducted by the Co-operative for Aborigines Ltd (N.S.W.) centred around the purpose of the co-operative movement.

Two young women are attending a crash cooking-catering course at East Syd-

ney Technical College, with the aim of helping in the Clump Mountain Co-operative tourist venture. They are residing at Tranby College.

Another young man, Wayne Connolly, from Yarrabah, is doing a mechanical course at Tech, studying co-op methods at Tranby, and is gaining experience in the fishing industry—to assist in the North Queensland co-op venture.

Tranby College is run by Co-operative for Aborigines Ltd and provides residential education courses for Aborigines and Islanders.

Each year a summer school is held at Tranby aimed at equipping native people to appreciate and apply co-operatives to solving their social economic problems.



AFTER purchase of tokens, subscribers to TIP (Transport Individual Public) receive keys to a fleet of 35 cars. Meters, operated on insertion of the token, record the driver's identity, allowing a subscriber to pick up a car whenever he likes and leave it anywhere at any time. Organizers estimate that 600 self-drive taxis could eliminate traffic congestion by removing 12,000 private cars from the streets of Montpelier, France.

Co-op way of life

**THE CO-OPERATIVE
FEDERATION OF NSW
LTD.**

THE Co-operative Federation of NSW is an association united by the mutual interest in establishing and maintaining the co-operative way of life in the State.

The federation was formed in 1964, following a meeting in Kempsey of co-op leaders who recognised the need for an association to unite the numerous co-operative societies.

They also recognised the need for a federation to represent the interest of co-operatives to the government, government departments and other bodies; the Co-operative Federation of Australia, and through that body the International Co-operative Alliance. The federation's objects are:

FOSTER the development and extension of the co-operative movement in NSW.
ADVISE on co-operative laws and practices.

CONSIDER and recommend legislation for the benefit of co-operatives and to watch the interests of co-operative

organisations in legislative matters generally.

ASSIST and advise co-operatives in industrial matters and the formulating of industrial awards and agreements.
PROMOTE the formation of new co-operative societies.

OBTAIN and provide advice and assistance to member societies on legal, accounting, administration, financial and all other problems and matters on which its advice and assistance may be sought, and to conduct schools of instruction on these matters.

DO such other things as shall be or may appear to be incidental or conducive to the attainment of these objects.

The membership consists of consumer co-operatives, fishing co-operatives, dairy-co-operatives, co-operative insurance companies, permanent building societies, marketing co-operatives, producers' co-operatives, credit unions and co-operative canneries.

The federation aims to represent the majority of New South Wales co-operatives—at June 30th, 1972, sixty-nine co-operatives were members.

The cost of financing the federation is spread out over member co-operatives in the fairest possible way by a graduated dues structure. Maximum annual subscription is \$400.

The policies of the federation are determined by member co-operatives represented at annual meetings by delegates, who also elect a board of directors.

GUYANA – THE “CO-OP REPUBLIC”

GUYANA, a small country located in the middle of South America, became independent from Great Britain in 1966 and on February 24, 1970, declared itself the world's first co-operative republic.

This was more than an attempt to support co-operative enterprise, nor was it an attempt to create a collective utopia of the type which has been seen from time to time and which has generally failed quickly.

Although a new country, its government has taken a realistic view of its problems and potentials and has elected to base its economy on a co-operative system.

The basis of this decision is summarised to some degree in the following extract from an article in the "Review of International Co-operation":

The concept of the Co-operative Republic Guyana, 83,000 square miles in area and with a population of 714,000, is a typical developing country.

Its major economic and social problems arise from reliance on two basic crops, rice and sugar, on the mining of bauxite, unemployment and under-employment, inadequate housing and a vast unexplored hinterland.

To diversify its agriculture,



Handcrafts produced
the Guyana Crafts Council

to integrate the bauxite industry with all the various linkages it offers, to provide good, low-cost and adequate housing to the majority of the Guyanese people, to gainfully employ the unemployed, to populate the hinterland and explore and gainfully exploit its rich mineral and timber resources—all these need capital, initiative, hard work, and skilled and trained personnel.

"CO-OPERATIVE COUNTRY"



and marketed through
Co-operative Society Ltd.

Foreign aid is too expensive a commodity. The Guyanese people believe that self-reliance, mutual help, hard work, training, the acquisition of new skills and new attitudes, based on the dignity of the human person and the brotherhood of man, can aid in the economic and social reconstruction of the Guyanese society.

They believe that the co-operative is the only instru-

ment through which the mass of the Guyanese people can be involved in the economic, social, spiritual and moral development of the nation.

In Guyana, developments are proving that there is no end to the ways in which the co-operative idea can be used and can be made to benefit the people in the everyday needs of life.

The Guyanese see the co-operative ideal as achieving:

- a) A united Guyanese people with an ideology and culture of their own.
- b) Economic reconstruction of the masses, whereby there will be no exploitation of the economically weak by the economically strong.
- c) A just society, in which the "small man" can share in the wealth of the nation by means of a decent wage, good housing, a measure of ownership, etc.
- d) A society, in which the resources of the country will be exploited by the people for the benefit of all the people.
- e) Social, moral and spiritual reconstruction of the society, in which the dignity of man and the sacredness of the human person prevail.
- f) And finally, a society, in which a man will be able to rise to his fullest capabilities regardless of race, color, class or creed.

Study tour by co-op officers

THREE local co-operative officers employed by the respective governments of the Cook Islands and the New Hebrides visited co-operatives in Northern Queensland late in September and early in October. Their visit included a study of co-operatives from Mossman to Mackay and across the Atherton Tablelands, and in Southern Queensland.

This three-week study tour program was organised between the governments of the territories concerned, and the Co-operative Federation of Queensland. It was arranged by Mr W. Kidston, chief executive officer of the CFQ, during his recent eight-weeks assignment to assist co-operatives in the various Pacific territories, including Tonga, Fiji, Cook Islands, British Solomons, New Hebrides and Papua-New Guinea.

The Pacific co-operative visitors included:
Miss D. Solomon: Acting registrar of co-operatives in the Cook Islands. She completed her training with distinction at the Co-operative College in Fiji and for many years has been supervising the audit of the annual accounts of co-operatives. She is the first woman to hold such a high and responsible position in a government co-operative registry in any territory in the Pacific.

Messrs W. R. Abel and A. A. Tuwi: Both co-operative inspectors from the British Residency in the New Hebrides. These officers have each spent some two years in the supervision and auditing of accounts in that territory.

The purpose of the visit of these overseas co-operators was to study the variety and scope of co-operatives in Queensland's tropical region.

It is anticipated that their tour will widen their visions. The various applications of co-operative principles to assist primary and secondary industry will be of considerable assistance to them in guiding their own people in the further expansion of the fast-growing co-operative movement in the Pacific.

Today, 2355 native co-operatives in this region serve the needs of more than 270,821 families.

CO-OP COMMENT in this issue calls for an application of the principle of co-operative education.

Naturally promotion of any co-operative will be easier if an effective education is given to prospective members. Therefore, it is not difficult to convince co-operative leaders of the need for such education.

However, according to recent co-operative literature, two aspects of co-operative education are receiving much attention overseas.

They are: member participation and community responsibility.

In an article in January-February, 1972 Co-op Report, the publication of the Co-operative League of the USA, Don Martin asked what are the factors which measure the social significance of co-operatives. He answered the question thus: "One criteria is how much involvement there is on the part of the membership in the affairs of the co-operative. By affairs of the co-operative we mean two things, the business side of the society and the social side.

"How many people participate in the annual meeting? How many candidates are there for the board of directors? How many people are elected or volunteer to serve on committees? How active is the co-operative in community affairs?

Thoughts

on

co-op

education

"What programs does the co-op have for youth and for senior citizens? What support is the co-op giving to the co-operative development decade of the Co-operative League and the International Co-operative Alliance?

"What role does the co-op play in the cultural life of the community? Does the co-op provide leadership and take stands on social questions like race relations, ecology, peace and drugs?

"Some will argue that co-operatives have no business being involved in some of these matters, particularly if they are the least bit controversial, as some people consider the questions of peace and race relations.

"But that is taking the narrow view of what co-operation is all about. The social significance of co-operation means creating a better society in which people can enjoy a better life.

continued next page

"These goals can only be achieved if we solve some of the social problems which exist in our own communities

"If a co-operative is worth its salt, if it is concerned with providing people with a better life in more than just materialistic ways, then the place to begin is in the local community, with local people, with co-operators and non-co-operators alike.

"Which local issue is tackled first is relatively unimportant. What is important is for the community to recognize the co-operative's concern for building a better community and providing the leadership for doing so . . .

"One of the persistent criticisms of co-operatives, particularly by young people idealistically searching for a better society, is that aside from the non-profit aspect of co-operatives, they see very little difference between co-operatives and any other types of business.

"The non-profit character of co-operatives is, in itself, important. But there are other differences which are equally significant, such as meaningful democratic ownership where members can express their views and where they can affect policy.

"There is also the aspect of open membership which can contribute to breaking down artificial barriers between people. Yet, there is

some validity to the criticism of those who say that co-operatives operate in many respects like other types of business.

"Most co-operatives have not taken the trouble to accentuate the positive — accentuate their differences. The leadership has been too concerned only with the bottom line of the operating statement . . .

"It is because I believe co-operatives attract capable people with social consciousnesses that we can organise and utilize the talents of these people to put co-operatives in the forefront of organizations working to create a better society.

"We can, if we try, make the social significance of co-operatives as important as the material advantages they provide for their members . . ."

X X X

FOLLOWING the announcement by the Federal Government of the inquiry into the Australian tax system, the Tax-payers' Association of Queensland convened a meeting of interested organisations.

The Co-operative Federation of Queensland, which has done a lot of work on taxation over the years, was invited to participate in the meeting.

People on the move

Mr Bill Kidston, chief executive officer of Co-operative Federation of Queensland, carried out an important co-operative assignment in the Pacific Islands in July and August.

Mr Kidston visited Papua-New Guinea, British Solomons, New Hebrides, Cook Islands, Tonga and Fiji. He spent four week in Fiji. For three of those weeks Mr Kidston was course consultant and lecturer for an All-Pacific School of Co-operative Officers.

On the fourth week he was working with the Fijian Government on legislation changes.

Mr W. W. Rawlinson, secretary of the Co-operative Federation of Australia, attended the 25th annual congress of the International Co-operative Alliance held at Warsaw from October 2-5.

The main papers for discussion at the congress were: "Multi-national corporations and the international co-operative movement — financial imperatives"; and "Technical assistance to co-operative movements in developing countries."



CONGRATULATIONS are extended to Mr Jack Maguire, general manager of Murray Goulburn Co-operative Co Ltd, on his election to the Australian Dairy Produce Board. He decisively won the poll to elect a representative of Victorian co-operative butter and cheese factories.

Jack Maguire has dedicated his working life to the dairy industry. He has made the progress and prosperity of the industry his objective and has applied co-operative methods to the task with great success.

Aborigines look to co-ops

By Joe
McGuinness

THE Co-operative for Aborigines (North Queensland) was formed towards the end of 1971, with the express purpose of extending the desire of many Aborigines and Islanders to involve themselves in the co-operative movement in North Queensland as a means of community development for our people.

As early as 1968, a group of Aborigines and Islanders had formed what is known as the Mona Mona Co-operative where it was hoped to establish a cattle-fattening project on a 4000-acre lease of an abandoned mission of the Seventh Day Adventists Church.

To commence this venture, an application was made for a loan from the Capital Fund

of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, but after a feasibility study by this department we were informed that a cattle-fattening venture would be impractical as the terms of the lease were too short to repay any capital outlay.

A grant of \$2000 was made to the co-operative by the Office of Aboriginal Affairs with the advice that the amount be used to establish vegetable farming. The produce no doubt would find a ready market locally.

A trial was made at sleeper cutting on this lease to supply railway demands, but because of inexperience of those involved and inadequate equipment for the job the contract had to be abandoned.

However, additional equipment is to be purchased and it is hoped with the improvement in the weather in the next few months the contract for railway sleepers can again get under way.

The major project visualised by the co-operative is the development of a motel, nature walk, Aboriginal artifact and banana farm, on 161 acres of land in the Clump Mountain area, which was originally willed to the co-operative. A condition of the will was that the area be for the use and training of Aborigines.

Towards the end of 1971, I together with Harrison George, a Torres Strait

continued next page

MOUNTAIN

VENTURE

from previous page

Islander on the staff of the Co-operative for Aborigines Ltd in Sydney, also a member of the board of directors, spent a few weeks recruiting Aborigines and Islanders as members to the North Queensland Co-operative.

Although our recruiting period was short we were

able to interest as well as enlist some 50 to 60 members.

But as we feel sure the Clump Mountain venture can be a worthwhile concern we consider that regardless of the outcome of our application to the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, and if our application is rejected, other avenues for financial assistance will have to be explored in order that our Clump Mountain venture gets under way this year.

— from *MILI-MILI, the Journal of the Co-operative for Aborigines*, August, 1972.



NSW annual conference

The 1972 annual conference of the Co-operative Federation of New South Wales Ltd will be held at Carlton-Rex Hotel, Sydney, on November 1 and 2. It will be opened by Mr D. Horton, the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Permanent Building Societies, Friendly Societies and Credit Unions.



Co-op seminars were held under the auspices of the Co-operative Federation of Queensland in Brisbane on September 4, and at Townsville on September 26. The theme of the seminars was Program for Profitability.

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